

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

1 October 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information as to its strategic or tactical impact on the US Army and should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available from the [Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center](#). The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT TOPICS

Avian Flu Vaccines Soon

26 September – Newkerala.com reported that a human vaccination for [avian flu](#) is likely to be available by next year. According to US scientist Fredrick L. Rueben, human trials of the vaccine have started in his country. Reuben, speaking to pediatricians here Saturday, said commercial production of the vaccine was expected by 2006. [View Article](#)

Blood Alternative Reduces Risk of Disease

27 September – EurekAlert reported that in the US today, the risk of acquiring HIV through a blood transfusion has been reduced to almost 1 in 900,000. However, the safety and quantity of our blood supply remains a constant concern. Research has helped to create hemoglobin-based oxygen carriers (HBOCs), an alternative to donor blood that is potentially safer and can help to solve the shortages in donor blood supply. In addition to the minimization of exposure to blood-borne diseases that may be carried in donor blood supplies, HBOCs can be stored longer than the 5-week shelf-life of red blood cells, which makes it ideal in situations of natural or manmade disasters. However, HBOCs do not remain in the circulation as long as red cells and they do not contain clotting factors or the cellular elements of the human body's defense system. [View Article](#)

Drug-Resistant Bacteria Increasingly Causing Infections in Healthy People

27 September – EurekAlert reported that an emerging form of so-called "flesh-eating bacteria" is caused by a strain that is resistant to standard first-line antibiotics. The same type of bacteria, [methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus](#) (MRSA) is causing record numbers of less-serious skin infections in children and also is emerging as a cause of pneumonia. Effective antibiotics are available to treat MRSA, but physicians are concerned that the bacteria will eventually become resistant to them. In recent years physicians are seeing drug resistant infections more and more in healthy people. Fourteen cases of [necrotizing fasciitis](#) infections, which can start in a small cut or trauma and spread throughout the body within hours or days if not treated with surgery and antibiotics, were studied. Most cases of necrotizing fasciitis are caused by a different type of bacteria called Group A streptococcus and about a third are fatal. Loren G. Miller, MD, MPH, the principal investigator stated that, "Four of the people had absolutely no other medical conditions or risk factors." [View Article](#)

Females May Be More Susceptible To Overindulge “Sweet Tooth” Cravings

23 September – The American Physiological Society reported that overeating and sedentary behavior are known risk factors for [obesity](#), but research in these areas – especially overeating – has been studied almost exclusively in males. In the new animal study researchers found that female rats are more susceptible than male rats to over consume a palatable, sweetened diet, and that female rats are less likely than male rats to use exercise as a means to control appetite in the presence of such a diet. [View Article](#)

More Cranberry Juice Better Against Urinary Tract Infections

30 September – HealthDayNews reported that patients with [urinary tract infections](#) (UTIs) often are told to drink cranberry juice to prevent future bladder problems. The advice is rather vague, since there's no data to show how much people should drink for prevention's sake. Tannins contained in cranberries interact with the tiny, hair-like protrusions on *E. coli* bacteria, the most common cause of UTIs. The infection-causing bacteria lose their stickiness and, instead of adhering to the walls of the bladder and causing infection, get washed away in urine. Researchers found that drinking eight ounces of the juice resulted in a 71 percent reduction in the amount of *E. coli* bacteria sticking to the bladder walls; a four-ounce serving produced a 33 percent reduction in the unwanted bacteria. [View Article](#)

Online Flu Shot Locator Launched

25 September – Drkoop.com reported that the American Lung Association (ALA) has launched an expanded [online flu shot locator](#) to help people across the nation find and get flu vaccinations in their neighborhoods. The locator includes more than 20,000 flu-shot locations. Users enter their ZIP code and the locator provides them with flu-shot locations within a 50-mile radius. The locator can also provide consumers with reminders about when flu vaccinations are available in their area. [View Article](#) [View ALA Site](#)

Focus on Epidemiology

US: Childhood Influenza-Vaccination in the 2002-2003 Season

24 September – MMWR reported that children aged <2 years are at increased risk for influenza-related hospitalizations. Beginning in 2002, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) encouraged that all children aged 6-23 months, as well as household contacts and out-of-home caregivers for children aged <2 years, receive influenza vaccinations each influenza season. Beginning with the 2004-2005 influenza season, ACIP strengthened the encouragement to a recommendation. Other children recommended to receive influenza vaccine continue to include those aged 6 months-18 years with certain high-risk medical conditions and those aged 6 months-18 years who are household contacts of persons at high risk for influenza complications. During the first year of the ACIP encouragement to vaccinate children aged 6-23 months against influenza, vaccination coverage was low, with substantial variability among states and urban areas. In the 2003 National Immunization Survey, the overall response rate for eligible households was 62.7%, and 13,831 children met the age criteria for this assessment. Of these, 7.4% received one or more influenza vaccinations, and 4.4% were fully vaccinated. Substantial variability in influenza coverage was observed among states and urban areas. Percentages of children receiving one or more influenza vaccinations ranged from 2.2% in El Paso County, Texas, to 26.6% in Rhode Island. [View Report](#)

DoD-GEIS: Avian Influenza A (H5N1)

29 September - A recent human case of [avian influenza](#) (AI) in Thailand raises concern about human-to-human transmission. For human AI, WHO reports a total of 42 confirmed cases of A (H5N1), including 30 deaths, in Thailand and Vietnam this year. The recent family cluster of 4 pneumonia cases may be linked to a human-to-human transmission event. A woman with no known exposure to infected chickens acquired A (H5N1) after prolonged exposure to her daughter, who was hospitalized with pneumonia. The girl and other family members were possibly exposed to infected chickens. The daughter died and was cremated before specimens were obtained. WHO has not reported additional cases of possible human-to-human transmission. Analysis of specimens from the mother is ongoing. The Thai Ministry of Public Health is investigating the family cluster with cooperative support from WHO and CDC. Evidence of efficient human-to-human transmission has not been reported with A (H5N1), but would signal a heightened threat for a pandemic. We are currently in influenza interpandemic phase 0, level 2, according to WHO, national and DoD influenza pandemic planning guidance. DoD's Global Influenza Surveillance System operated by the Air Force Institute for Operational Health (AFIOH) conducts surveillance throughout the year and publishes reports weekly during the flu season (beginning 1 October) and monthly otherwise. CDC begins weekly influenza surveillance reporting October 1 for the flu season. CDC has issued no travel alerts based on H5N1 but advises travelers to Southeast Asia to avoid areas where live poultry are kept and to avoid sick and dead poultry. The Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center 28SEP04 risk assessment for AI is now available from AFMIC. Informative web sites include [CDC](#), [Institute of Medicine](#), and [WHO](#). Information on Influenza (avian and human) including the DoD Global Influenza Program, WNV, Leishmaniasis and severe respiratory syndromes, including SARS, is available on the [DoD-GEIS website](#).

Other timely information can be found in:

The current issue of the Army Medical Surveillance Activity's [Medical Surveillance Monthly Report](#) and this week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

USCENTCOM

Iraq Agency Reports Hepatitis E Outbreak

24 September – Newsday.com reported that an outbreak of [hepatitis E](#) has infected at least 60 people south of the capital. Ni'ama Saeed, head of the Iraqi Health Ministry's general health department, blamed contaminated water and the absence of a regular sewage system for the outbreak around Mahmoudiyah, 25 miles south of Baghdad. The WHO said it had received a report of 60 cases of hepatitis E from Iraq and was monitoring the situation with the communicable diseases center in Baghdad. Nine of those ill are pregnant women, WHO spokeswoman Fadela Chaib said. There is some research that suggests the virus can be fatal to pregnant women. No deaths have been reported in Mahmoudiyah, Saeed said. Five people, including two pregnant women, died of hepatitis E two months ago in the Baghdad slum of Sadr City, he said. [View Article](#)

Hepatitis E in Sudan - WHO Update 3

28 September – ProMED reported that from 22 May 2004 to 17 Sep 2004, a total of 6861 cases and 87 deaths of suspected [hepatitis E](#) were reported from health clinics in the Greater Darfur. The

number of reported cases per week continues to increase. West Darfur remains the most affected area. There are ongoing control measures being implemented in the 3 states. Health agencies, have been working to scale up mass hygiene education programs, increase the availability of soap, dig new wells, and ensure effective chlorination of water bladders and wells. Existing resources remain insufficient to cover the basic water and sanitation needs of the displaced populations in Darfur. [View Article](#)

Kyrgyzstan: Hepatitis on the Increase in Southern Kyrgyzstan

29 September – ProMED reported that epidemiological services are seeing a steep rise in the number of acute viral [hepatitis](#) cases in southern Kyrgyzstan. In Osh alone, about 100 people were hospitalized with hepatitis in September. The hepatitis incidence rate for 2004 exceeds last year's level by 50 percent. The number of infected people is increasing in rural areas, including the Kara-Suu, Aravan, and Uzgen districts, where one or 2 patients are hospitalized with hepatitis each day. According to official statistics, about 1500 people became infected with various forms of hepatitis in Osh province over the past 8 months with hepatitis being the most common type. Almost 1200 of them were children under 14. Roughly 5 percent of all those infected suffer the more serious forms of the disease, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, which are difficult to cure. [View Article](#)

Pakistan: Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Death in Rawalpindi

27 September – ProMED reported that the Ministry of Health confirmed a recent death from [Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever](#) virus and issued precautionary instructions to the Punjab Health Department on how to deal with a possible outbreak. A patient died of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever early this week in Rawalpindi General Hospital. The doctor who 1st attended to the patient also developed symptoms of the virus. The doctor was placed in isolation to avoid further transmission of infection. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Anthrax Outbreak in Zimbabwe

27 September – News.com.au reported that an [anthrax](#) outbreak has killed 1500 animals, mostly kudus, in two conservation areas next to one of Zimbabwe's largest game parks, the director of veterinary services said today. The outbreak was detected three weeks ago in Malalangwe and Save conservation areas situated near the south-eastern Gonarezhou National Park. "About 80 per cent of the animals that have died are kudus and the others are buffaloes and antelopes," said Stuart Hargreaves, the director of livestock and veterinary services. Mr. Hargreaves said government and other wildlife agencies had moved in fast to control the outbreak by vaccinating at least 700 endangered rhinos and buffaloes, and disposing of the dead animals. Of the 1500 animals that were killed, 1400 carcasses have been incinerated to prevent lions, hyenas and vultures from eating the dead animals. [View Article](#)

Cholera in Chad - Update

27 September – The WHO reported that 3910 cases and 164 deaths (case fatality rate, 4.2%) from [cholera](#) have been reported from 14 June to 19 August 2004. The outbreak is declining in the western

part of the country except for Bousso where there are new outbreaks. The outbreak started in Massaguet (Hadjar Lamine) north of N'Djaména, the capital city, and from there it spread to Lac and Kanem provinces as well as to N'Djaména. Cases have now been reported in Mongo and Ati, two areas between N'Djaména and Abeché. A team from the Global Task Force on Cholera Control will work with the Ministry of Health in assessing and supporting preparedness activities in the areas where refugees from Darfur are present. [View Article](#)

Hepatitis E in Chad - Update 4

27 September – The WHO reported that between 26 June and 17 September 1442 cases and 46 deaths (case fatality rate 3.2%) of suspected [hepatitis E](#) cases have been reported from refugee camps Goz Amer, Djabal and neighboring villages. The overall weekly number of reported cases is decreasing in the camps but not in the neighboring villages around Goz Amer camp. The team from the Global Task Force on Cholera Control working in eastern Chad will be following up with the implementation of the water and sanitation recommendations, including the systematic chlorination of all water points, increasing soap distribution and social mobilization and health education activities. [View Article](#)

Italy: Anthrax in Humans and Livestock

30 September - In Basilicata, southern Italy, in the past 2 weeks, there have been outbreaks of [anthrax](#), affecting dairy cattle, horses and wild deer. All these animals were at pasture. Yesterday 2 dairy cows died, having been vaccinated 4 days beforehand. Two veterinarians have developed cutaneous anthrax. This mountainous area normally has 2 to 3 outbreaks each summer. This series of outbreaks has been ascribed to the heavy rains eroding historically contaminated cattle graves and thus depositing spores in the pastures. [View Article](#)

King-size Chocolate Bars to be Axed

27 September – The Guardian reported that confectionary manufacturers announced the phasing out of some king-size chocolate bars in a move intended to tackle rising levels of [obesity](#). King-size Mars and Snickers bars could disappear next year under seven pledges set out by the industry association, the Food and Drink Federation, to make products healthier. The pledges come ahead of a health white paper due to be published later this autumn. They include clearer labeling; reduced fat, sugar and salt levels; the removal of vending machines from schools; and a rethink on some portion sizes. In May, a House of Commons health select committee report warned of a growing obesity epidemic. It recommended that the government consider direct regulation of the food industry if the industry had not proved itself to be tackling the problem in three years. [View Article](#)

Probe into Food Bug Outbreak

24 September – BBC News reported that an investigation is under way after a huge increase in the numbers suffering from a strain of the [salmonella](#) bug in Northern Ireland in the past month. About three cases of salmonella Newport are normally found in the province each year, but so far this month there are 41 confirmed and 40 suspected cases. The Northern Ireland Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, in conjunction with four health boards, is looking into the source of the outbreak. They say there is no firm evidence of the cause, but are urging people to ensure salad vegetables are washed. Eighteen of the cases have needed hospital treatment. Investigators are liaising with their counterparts in England where there has been a rise in cases of the food poisoning bug in Birmingham, the West Midlands and North East Lincolnshire areas. Inquiries had shown that the

strain of salmonella in Northern Ireland was identical to that in England, which suggested a link between the cases. [View Article](#)

Suspected Anthrax Outbreak Kills Cattle in Caprivi

27 September – AllAfrica.com reported that recent outbreaks of [anthrax](#) in the Chobe National Park in Botswana seem to have spread to the eastern Caprivi, where hundreds of cattle appear to have been infected by the highly contagious disease that has claimed dozens of elephant and buffalo in Botswana. The infected cattle appear to have contracted the disease from the grasslands that they share with herds of free-roaming wild buffalo, elephant and other game. Villagers became suspicious of the disease when the milk production of their cattle dropped significantly, while some milk and even the urine of some of the cattle appeared crimson in color. Veterinary officials at Katima Mulilo were not immediately available to confirm what appears to be an anthrax outbreak at Kasika and at Kabulabula. Plans are already afoot to vaccinate tens of thousands of cattle from the deadly disease that is caused by a virulent bacterium called bacillus. [View Article](#)

USNORTHCOM

Alcohol-Attributable Deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost — US, 2001

24 September – The CDC reported that in 2001, [excessive drinking](#) (defined as >2 drinks per day for men or >4 drinks per occasion; or an average of >1 drink per day for women, or >3 drinks per occasion) claimed more than 75,000 lives in the U.S., and shortened the lives of those who died by an average of 30 years, resulting in a total of over 2.3 million years of potential life lost. Deaths were almost evenly divided between chronic conditions (46 percent) (e.g., liver disease) and acute conditions (54 percent) (e.g., car crashes). All deaths from acute conditions were due to binge drinking (i.e., 5 drinks or more per occasion for men; 4 drinks or more per occasion for women). Most deaths from excessive drinking involved men (72 percent), and most of the men who died were age 35 or older (75 percent). [View Article](#)

Army Expands Anthrax, Smallpox Vaccinations

22 September – Military.com reported that [anthrax](#) vaccinations have resumed for soldiers whose series of injections were interrupted during the anthrax vaccine shortages of 2000-2001. Active-duty soldiers and members of the Army Reserve and Guard who stopped getting vaccinated in the middle of their six-shot anthrax series are to resume their vaccination schedules, at the point where they left off. They are not to repeat or receive extra doses of the vaccine. The Army's immunization program has expanded to require both anthrax and [smallpox vaccinations](#) for soldiers, emergency-essential and equivalent civilian employees, and mission-essential contractor personnel assigned to the following areas: the Korean Peninsula, Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. [View Article](#)

Bacterial Disease Sickens Hundreds of California Sea Lions

24 September – SFGate.com reported that hundreds of California sea lions have been sickened by a bacterial disease that also can infect humans, pets and other mammals. Of the 309 sea lions rescued by the Marine Mammal Center so far this year, more than 45 percent, or 142, have been diagnosed

with [leptospirosis](#). In 2003, only 4.6 percent of the 607 rescued sea lions were infected. About half the rescued sea lions have died in the current outbreak. If it's not treated -- in either animals or people -- it can cause kidney damage, meningitis, liver failure and respiratory distress. Rescuers are taking precautions -- such as protecting any open cuts. The disease is commonly contracted through urine in the soil or water. [View Article](#)

EPA Finds *E Coli*, Coliform in Airplane Water Tests

27 September - CIDRAP News reported that more than 12% of passenger aircraft contained [Escherichia coli](#) or [coliform bacteria](#) in a recent round of testing, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found. Drinking water aboard 158 randomly selected passenger planes was tested. While 87.4% of the planes met EPA drinking-water quality standards, 12.6% did not. Initial testing showed 20 planes had positive results for total coliform bacteria; two of them also tested positive for *E coli*. Both of those contaminants are indicators that the water could contain other disease-causing organisms. Passengers with compromised immune systems may want to request canned or bottled beverages. [View Article](#)

Flu Shots Urged for All

25 September – The Free Lance-Star reported that each year the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publishes a long list of those who should get the [flu](#) shot. At the top of the list are the young, the old, the sick and their caregivers. At the bottom of the list is a catch-all category: "Anyone who wants to lower their chances of getting the flu." In other words, everyone should get it. October is the traditional start of the flu season. Interest in the flu shot is expected to be high this year after a moderately severe season last year. By the end of the season, the CDC counted 152 deaths among children 18 and younger in the United States, the vast majority unvaccinated. About 200,000 Americans are hospitalized each year because of the flu. Flu-related complications kill about 36,000 people each year. [View Article](#)

Illinois: Peoria Students have Staph

25 September - The Peoria Journal Star reported that two Washington Community High School students have been diagnosed with [staph](#) infections, the district's superintendent said Friday. Those cases follow an outbreak of staph infections at East Peoria High School two weeks ago. Twenty-eight East Peoria High students have confirmed cases of staph infections, and 11 have begun treatment because of suspicion of infection. More than 50 others have been sent home with symptoms. Staph infection is a bacteria commonly found in the nose, mouth, rectum or genital area. It typically enters the body through skin-to-skin contact on a cut or wound, though it can be inhaled. [View Article](#)

Outbreak of Cyclosporiasis Associated with Snow Peas — Pennsylvania, 2004

24 September – The CDC reported that an outbreak of [cyclosporiasis](#) -- a diarrheal illness caused by the parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis* -- occurred among persons associated with a residential facility in Pennsylvania; 96 cases of illness were identified. The cases were linked to consumption of raw Guatemalan snow peas at five special events catered by the facility from late May through late June 2004. This is the first documented outbreak of cyclosporiasis linked to snow peas. Previous foodborne outbreaks have been linked to several other types of fresh produce from various countries. FDA and CDC are collaborating with Guatemalan officials to determine the sources of the snow peas and possible modes of contamination. No evidence of ongoing transmission has been obtained. [View Article](#)

Post-Service Mortality in Vietnam Veterans

27 September – The Archives of Internal Medicine reported that during the 1980s, the post-service mortality component of the Vietnam Experience Study was conducted to examine the health effects of the Vietnam experience. This study was limited by the relatively short follow-up and the young age of the veterans. Thus, a follow-up (30-year) mortality investigation on this cohort was undertaken to further assess the impact of the Vietnam experience on chronic conditions. Vital status and underlying cause-of-death data on 18,313 male US Army veterans were retrospectively ascertained from the end of the original study through 2000. Overall mortality was 7% higher in Vietnam than non-Vietnam veterans. The excess mortality among Vietnam veterans was isolated to the first 5 years after discharge from active duty and resulted from an increase in external causes of death. Vietnam veterans, however, experienced excess unintentional poisoning and drug-related deaths throughout follow-up. Death rates from disease-related chronic conditions, including cancers and circulatory system diseases, did not differ between Vietnam veterans and their peers. [View Article](#)

Research Team to Study Whether Cleaning Teeth Reduces Heart Disease

24 September – EurekAlert reported that an Indiana University School of Dentistry researcher, Dr. Michael Kowolik, will study whether dental patients whose teeth are cleaned regularly may be reducing their chances of developing [heart disease](#). The research comes at a time when chronic infections in the body are under increasing investigation for the role they may play in the development of a number of health problems, including heart disease. Three years ago, Kowolik published a study showing that this same accumulation of [plaque](#) on teeth, which leads to [gingivitis](#), produced a systemic response from the body's main line of defense to infections: the white blood cell. Cardiologists have known for 20 years that one of the principal risk factors for a heart attack is an elevated white blood cell count, Kowolik said. "We will study whether allowing plaque to accumulate is sufficient to raise the white blood cell count to the point it would become a risk factor for heart disease." [View Article](#)

Secondary *E. coli* Cases Feared

26 September – The Winnipeg Sun reported that doctors could start seeing secondary cases of [E. coli](#) in the city's latest outbreak. Dr. Judy MacDonald, the Calgary Health Region's deputy medical officer of health, said if infected people aren't taking the proper precautions, they could pass the bacteria on to family members or other people. So far, more than 40 cases have been reported; the ongoing investigation has led to the voluntary, temporary closure of two eating establishments; and three people remain in hospital. [View Article](#)

US Scientists Warn of Suburban Health Hazard

28 September - The Guardian reported that the suburbs have long been seen as a sanctuary from the stresses of city living. In fact, living in the suburbs can lead to a range of chronic illnesses including high blood pressure, arthritis, diabetes and migraines. The health profile of an adult with a home in the spacious suburbs of Atlanta was the same as someone who lived in inner-city Seattle but was four years older. Studies have found that inhabitants of suburbs are dependent on their cars and so walk less, weigh more and suffer from higher blood pressure than their city cousins. "We know from previous studies that suburban sprawl reduces the time people spend walking and increases the time they spend sitting in cars, and that is associated with higher obesity rates," said Roland Sturm, a co-author. However, the US scientists found no differences in the reported rates of depression, anxiety and psychological well-being between suburbanites and those living in inner cities. [View Article](#)

Veterans with Gulf War Syndrome Have Damage in Nervous System

27 September – EurekAlert reported that researchers have uncovered damage in a specific, primitive portion of the nervous systems of veterans suffering from [Gulf War syndrome](#). Damage to the parasympathetic nervous system may account for nearly half of the typical symptoms – including gallbladder disease, unrefreshing sleep, depression, joint pain, chronic diarrhea and sexual dysfunction – that afflict those with Gulf War syndrome. The parasympathetic system regulates primitive, automatic bodily functions such as digestion and sleep, while the sympathetic nervous system controls the "fight or flight" instinct. Researchers found that parasympathetic brain function, which usually peaks during sleep, barely changed in veterans with Gulf War syndrome even though they appeared to be sleeping. In a group of well veterans tested for comparison, the brain functions increased normally. In addition, pure sympathetic nervous system functions were tested. In these tests, there were no appreciable differences between ill and healthy veterans. [View Article](#)

Whooping Cough Outbreak Concerns Health Officials

27 September 2004 – The Milwaukee Channel.com reported that Wisconsin health officials say it isn't business as usual when it comes to a [whooping cough](#) outbreak. Doctors are being urged to aggressively treat people with symptoms and those who've been in close contact with the patient. Statewide, there are more than 2,000 confirmed and probable cases of pertussis. That compares with more than 700 last year. The outbreak started in May. Health care workers are concerned the outbreak could overlap with the cold and flu season. The whooping cough vaccine usually begins losing its effectiveness five to six years after the last dose. The vaccine is usually given at age 6. [View Article](#)

USPACOM

Diarrhea Outbreak Hits Flood-Stricken Bangladesh

[Diarrhea](#) blamed on late monsoon floods has killed one child and stricken hundreds of others in southwestern Bangladesh, relief officials said today. An outbreak of diarrhea, caused by drinking polluted water, has emerged in the flood-hit districts of Satkhira, Jessore and Magura, they said. One child died of diarrhea in Magura, 64 miles west of the capital, Dhaka. Doctors have treated another 500 people, mostly children, for diarrhea in Magura, Jessore and Satkhira districts. Bangladesh is still struggling to recover from massive floods in July and August. Those floods killed at least 766 people and affecting more than 30 million, many of them left without homes and jobs. [View Article](#)

Fiji: Mystery Virus Worries Ministry

24 September – The Fiji Times Online reported that the cause of an [influenza](#)-like illness (ILI) outbreak in Fiji is of concern to the Ministry of Health. National disease outbreak specialist Dr. Joe Koroivueta confirmed that 16,484 of influenza-like cases had been reported from hospitals and health centers around the country from January to early September. "To date we have not been able to identify the causative agent for the influenza-like disease now in existence in Fiji," he said. He said blood samples from patients that fit their surveillance case definition were tested. All the samples were tested for influenza A and B, dengue and leptospirosis but the results were negative. The symptoms of the mysterious influenza are cough, sore throat, fever and body aches. "There were no

rash or skin hemorrhagic lesions noted and there has been no case of bleeding or death attributed to the ILI cases to our knowledge," Dr Koroivueta said. [View Article](#)

Fiji: No Viral Outbreak

27 September – Health authorities have confirmed that there is no viral outbreak in the Western Division of Fiji. Doctors yesterday said the influenza-like illness experienced by people was the result of a change in the weather. Chief medical officer for community health in the West, Dr. Tharid Ali said changes in the weather upset people's immune system. "There is no virus. Very small numbers of people are going to health centers and hospitals in the division," he said. "As a result of hot, cold and rainy weather patterns, people's immune system is upset and we see this flu-like sickness." [View Article](#)

Malaysia: More Dengue Cases Being Reported

23 September – The Star Online reported that [dengue](#) fever hit a new weekly peak of 332 cases in the last week of August, eclipsing last year's high of 258. While the figure has come down, it is hard to say if the situation has stabilized, said Minister for the Environment and Water Resources. As of last Saturday, the total number of dengue fever cases was 5,248, a 48% rise over the same period last year. Homes are the weakest link in the war against mosquitoes. A National Environment Agency check of more than 228,000 homes this year found them accounting for 60% of mosquito-breeding cases. [View Article](#)

South Australia: Whooping Cough Outbreak Sparks Concern

24 September – ABC News Online reported that the Department of Health is concerned about an outbreak of [whooping cough](#) in South Australia. Dr. Rod Givney says there have been more cases of whooping cough notified to date this year than the whole of last year, including 75 last month. He says about 25 per cent involve infants and parents need to be proactive by ensuring their children have been immunized. "What happens every two to three years, namely that numbers of cases of pertussis go up very quickly," he said. "Pertussis is the same disease as whooping cough, that's a very high infectious respiratory disease where people at any age get a very unpleasant illness." "You can cough for weeks or even up to months. But where it's most worrying is in very young children." [View Article](#)

Two New Cases of Leptospirosis Confirmed in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has confirmed two new cases of [leptospirosis](#) involving participants of the hiking activity "Team Challenge 36" held in August. A CHP spokesman said: "The two affected are a 36-year-old man and a 19-year-old woman. Their blood samples were confirmed positive for leptospirosis today." The 36-year-old man's left leg and elbow were wounded and soaked with water during the activity. In the woman's case, she had also visited some stream areas and participated in rafting during the activity. [View Article](#)

Viet Nam: Another Human Case of Avian Influenza Confirmed

29 September – ProMED reported that the Ministry of Health of Viet Nam has confirmed that the death of a 14-month-old boy in early September was caused by [avian influenza](#) A (H5N1) virus infection. This is the third death from the virus in Viet Nam since August. The baby in Hanoi had typical symptoms of avian influenza virus infection, including fever and cough. He died about a week after catching the virus. [View Article](#)

Western Australia: Whooping Cough Outbreak Alert

26 September – News.com.au reported that an Australia-wide alert has been called after Western Australian (WA) health authorities reported an alarming increase in the number of [whooping cough](#) cases. NT Centre for Disease Control head of immunization, Dr. Tania Wallace, said WA had reported 237 cases of whooping cough in the past fortnight -- taking the state's total for this year to 700. Dr. Wallace said WA would usually report fewer than 200 cases a year. [View Article](#)

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Haiti: Flood Deaths May Top 2000

28 September – BBC News reported that flooding in Haiti from tropical storm Jeanne is feared to have killed more than 2,000 people. The mayor of Gonaives, said bodies were still being found, 10 days after the storm. The UN has warned that the situation in the city is "critical". Relief workers say food is still not getting to people quickly enough, amid problems with security and logistical problems caused by the storm. Many residents in Gonaives have not had food for a week. The UN troops have been mobilized to stop people fighting at food distribution points. A doctor reported that he had treated 30 people for gunshot wounds received in fights over food. The city is still without electricity or running water, and lacks basic medicines such as antibiotics. Volunteer doctors have spoken of appalling conditions as they try to help the storm survivors in makeshift clinics. "There's no clean water. There are no resources," Dr. Jose Manuel Aguilar told AP at a tent hospital set up by Cuban and Venezuelan doctors. [View Article](#)

High Resolution Satellite Imagery Assists Hunt for Infectious 'Kissing Bugs'

28 September – The European Space Agency (ESA) reported that in crammed slums in the Nicaraguan district of Matagalpa, aid workers are hunting house-to-house for blood-sucking reduviid insects, generally known as 'kissing bugs' because they emerge from their hiding places each night to bite human skin where it is thinnest – around the mouth and eyes. Their search is guided by high-resolution satellite imagery supplied through an ESA-backed project. The kissing bugs are harmless by themselves, but carry a microscopic protozoan parasite that causes the wasting and eventually lethal [Chagas disease](#). Infection by this *Trypanosoma cruzi* parasite may cause serious long-term symptoms: ten to 15 years after initial infection the heart enlarges and grows weaker; internal organs are also affected. Chagas disease affects at least 16 million people across Central and South America, of which 21,000 die every year. [View Article](#)

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